

VERTIGO

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THE
GOOD
PRINCE

PART ONE

WILLINGHAM
BUCKINGHAM
LEIALOHA

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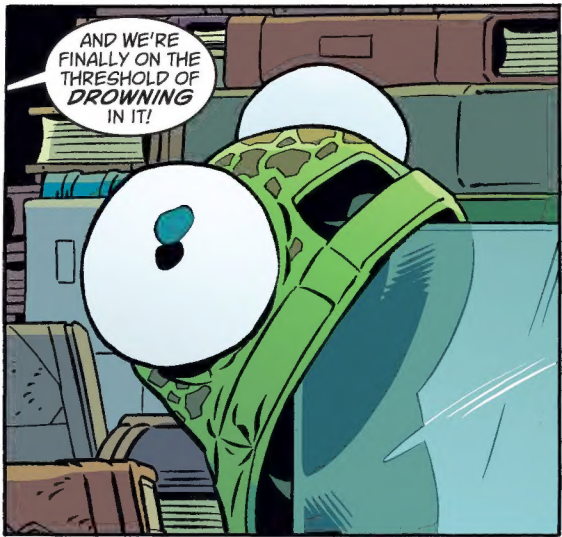
Jun 07
suggested for
mature readers
vertigo.com



A MESS!



A GREAT
BIG *FILTHY*
MESS!



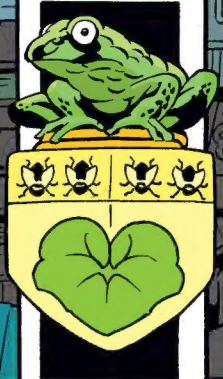
AND WE'RE
FINALLY ON THE
THRESHOLD OF
DROWNING
IN IT!



SOME OF THESE
PILES ARE ACTUALLY A
DANGER TO US. IF THEY WERE
TO FALL OVER ON ONE OF US,
WE'D DIE OF *STARVATION*
BEFORE THEY COULD DIG
US OUT AGAIN.

NOW
YOU KNOW
THAT'S COMPLETE
NONSENSE,
PRINCE
CHARMING.

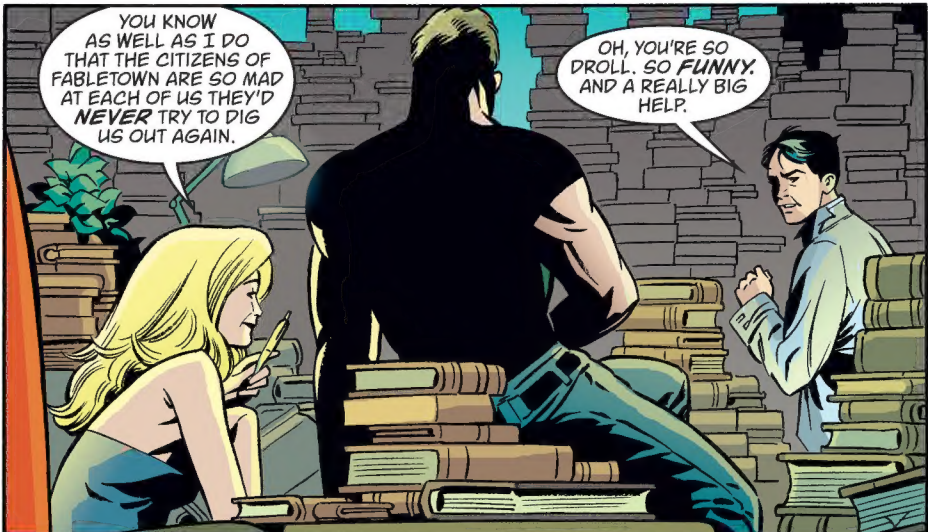
Flycatcher
Chapter
One of
The Good
Prince



In which a good
man whose only
job was to stay
in the back-
ground and
keep the
floors clean is
finally forced to
realize all of
the horrors of
his life.

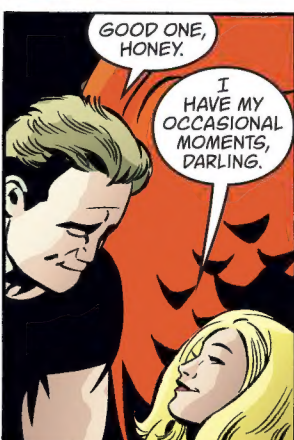
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YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT THE CITIZENS OF FABLETOWN ARE SO MAD AT EACH OF US THEY'D NEVER TRY TO DIG US OUT AGAIN.

OH, YOU'RE SO DROLL. SO FUNNY. AND A REALLY BIG HELP.



GOOD ONE, HONEY.

I HAVE MY OCCASIONAL MOMENTS, DARLING.



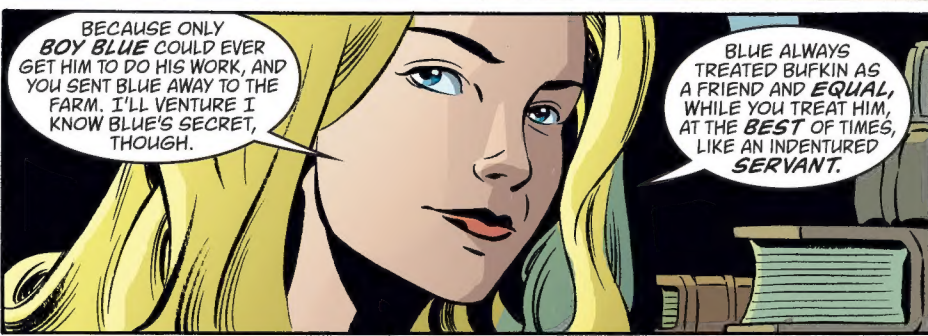
WHY IS IT SO IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THIS CRAP CLEANED UP?

WE'VE GOT A HUNDRED MILLION SQUARE FEET OF SHELF SPACE IN THIS OFFICE BUT WE CAN'T FIND ANY ROOM TO RE-SHELVING THESE BOOKS?



ONLY BUFKIN KNOWS WHERE EACH BOOK GOES. HE KEEPS IT ALL IN HIS HEAD SOMEHOW-HIS ONE SPECIAL TALENT. WHAT'S THE TERM? IDIOT SAVANT?

THEN WHY WON'T BUFKIN GET IT DONE?



BECAUSE ONLY BOY BLUE COULD EVER GET HIM TO DO HIS WORK, AND YOU SENT BLUE AWAY TO THE FARM. I'LL VENTURE I KNOW BLUE'S SECRET, THOUGH.

BLUE ALWAYS TREATED BUFKIN AS A FRIEND AND EQUAL, WHILE YOU TREAT HIM, AT THE BEST OF TIMES, LIKE AN INDENTURED SERVANT.





WHAT IF I THREATEN TO SEND THAT DAMNED MONKEY TO THE FARM?

WON'T WORK, MR. MAYOR. BUFKIN IS PAINFULLY AWARE OF HOW MUCH WE NEED HIM DOWN HERE.

HE'D JUST LAUGH IN YOUR FACE AT BEST OR THROW SOMETHING ELSE IN YOUR FACE AT WORST.



HAVE I MENTIONED YET TODAY HOW MUCH I HATE THIS JOB?

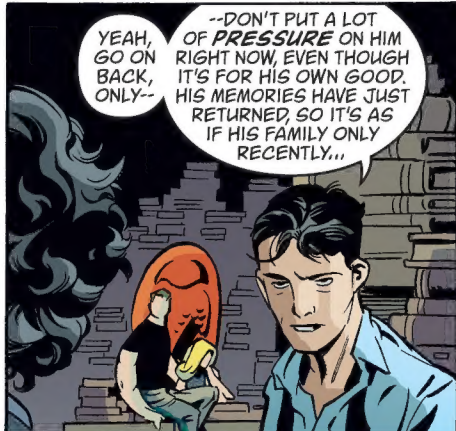
OH, MISS RIDING HOOD. I DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE.



I DIDN'T WANT TO INTRUDE ON YOUR IMPORTANT MATTERS OF STATE, MR. MAYOR.



I THOUGHT I'D JUST TRY AGAIN TO GET AMBROSE TO EAT SOMETHING. IS HE STILL IN THAT CHAPEL ROOM?



YEAH, GO ON BACK, ONLY--

--DON'T PUT A LOT OF PRESSURE ON HIM RIGHT NOW, EVEN THOUGH IT'S FOR HIS OWN GOOD. HIS MEMORIES HAVE JUST RETURNED, SO IT'S AS IF HIS FAMILY ONLY RECENTLY...



WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. EVERYONE ELSE DOES NOW. FLY NEEDS SOME TIME TO SORT THINGS OUT.

I REALIZE THAT, MR. MAYOR. I'LL INTRUDE AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.





AMBROSE?

I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT I THOUGHT YOU--

--WELL, YOU DO NEED TO EAT SOMETHING SOON, OR YOU'LL WASTE AWAY.



NOT AS UNPLEASING A THOUGHT AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE.

JUST SET IT DOWN, PLEASE.

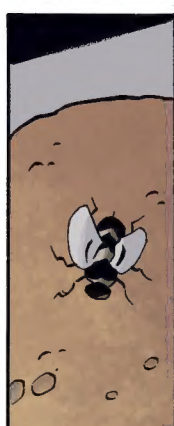


I'LL TRY SOMETHING IN A BIT. I PROMISE.

AND THANK YOU, RIDING HOOD. YOU'RE A GOOD FRIEND.



AMBROSE--



B

B



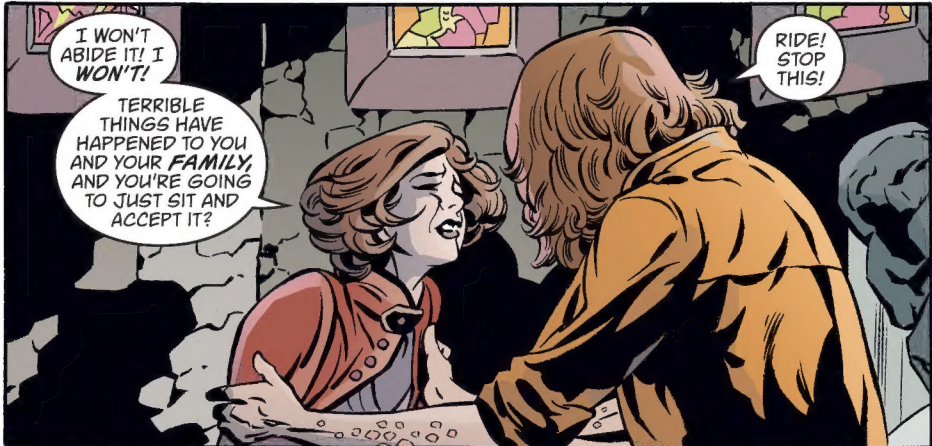
FLYCATCHER!



NO! NO! NO!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS!



RIDE?



I WON'T ABIDE IT! I WON'T!

TERRIBLE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY, AND YOU'RE GOING TO JUST SIT AND ACCEPT IT?

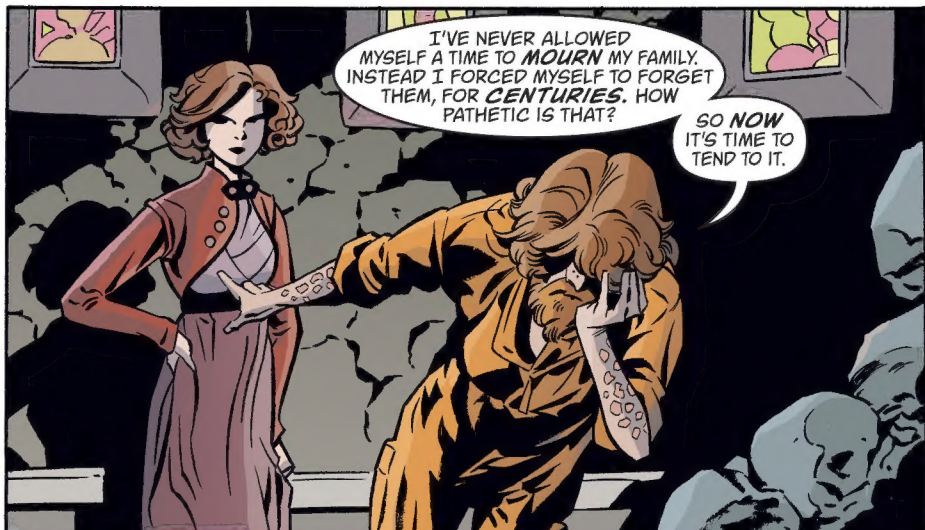
RIDE! STOP THIS!



YOU'RE JUST GOING TO GIVE UP, WHERE A REAL MAN WOULD GET ANGRY? A REAL MAN WOULD DEVISE HIS VENGEANCE!

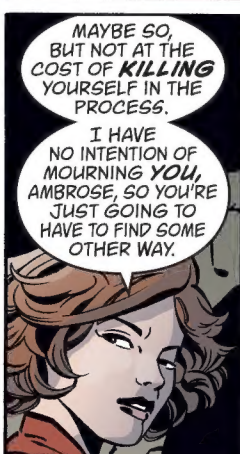
THIS IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!





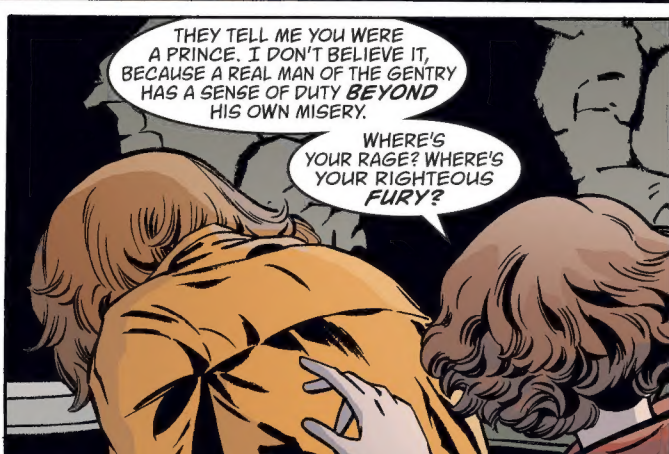
I'VE NEVER ALLOWED MYSELF A TIME TO *MOURN* MY FAMILY. INSTEAD I FORCED MYSELF TO FORGET THEM, FOR *CENTURIES*. HOW PATHETIC IS THAT?

SO NOW IT'S TIME TO TEND TO IT.



MAYBE SO, BUT NOT AT THE COST OF *KILLING* YOURSELF IN THE PROCESS.

I HAVE NO INTENTION OF MOURNING *YOU*, AMBROSE, SO YOU'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO FIND SOME OTHER WAY.



THEY TELL ME YOU WERE A PRINCE. I DON'T BELIEVE IT, BECAUSE A REAL MAN OF THE GENTRY HAS A SENSE OF DUTY *BEYOND* HIS OWN MISERY.

WHERE'S YOUR RAGE? WHERE'S YOUR *RIGHTEOUS FURY*?



I CAN'T BE ANY MORE THAN A *FRIEND* TO YOU, RIDING HOOD. WE CAN NEVER BE TOGETHER AS--

ALL THINGS HAVE TO BE DONE PROPERLY.

I REALIZE THAT.



THERE YOU ARE!

GET DOWN HERE, YOU *BAD* MONKEY!



I UNDERSTAND YOU THINK YOU'RE *INVULNERABLE* AROUND HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHERE EVERYTHING IS.

WELL, MR. BUFKIN, THAT'S ABOUT TO *END*.



I'VE LONG THOUGHT WE SHOULD INSTITUTE AN ACTUAL, FORMAL CATALOGUING SYSTEM.

AND NOW, SINCE YOU *CLEARLY* NO LONGER INTEND TO DO YOUR WORK, IT'S HIGH TIME TO BEGIN IT.



SO, IF EVERY BOOK ISN'T CLEANED UP OFF OUR FLOORS AND PROPERLY STACKED BY THE END OF THE DAY, I WILL *KILL* YOU.

AND THEN *COOK* YOU.

AND THEN *EAT* YOU.

WITH *GUSTO*.



BEAUTY!

WHERE'S OUR JACK KETCH?

TELL HIM TO GET INTO HIS OFFICIAL HEAD-CHOPPING GEAR AND REPORT FOR DUTY!





GOOD AFTERNOON, BABA YAGA. READY FOR OUR WEEKLY VISIT?

IS IT TUESDAY AGAIN ALREADY? MY, HOW TIME FLIES. NOW, WHERE WERE WE?



WE WERE DISCUSSING EMPIRE LEADERSHIP. WE FINALLY DISCOVERED WHO THE ADVERSARY IS FROM OTHER SOURCES. THE CAPTURED WOODEN HEADS CAN BE QUITE TALKATIVE.

BUT IF YOU'D LIKE TO **CONFIRM** THOSE INTELLIGENCES--



YOU ONLY KEPT THE HEADS? WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE BODIES? THEY WERE ALSO CARVED FROM SACRED WOOD AND ARE **NOT** TO BE WASTED.

IF YOU REBEL FABLES HAVE DESTROYED THEM, THEN IT'S ANOTHER **CRIME** TO BE ADDED TO YOUR EVER-GROWING LEDGER.



THEY WERE TOSSED DOWN THE WITCHING WELL, ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE DEAD FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE BATTLE.

THE WITCHING WELL? SO YOU **DID** MANAGE TO STEAL IT AWAY FROM THE HOMELANDS. HOW DELIGHTFUL TO FINALLY HAVE THAT **CONFIRMED**.



DO YOU SEE, LITTLE GIRL? YOU THINK **YOU'RE** THE ONE QUESTIONING ME, BUT I WILL **ALWAYS** LEARN MUCH MORE FROM **YOU**.

THAT'S WHY I **SO** LOVE THE TIME I'M SPENDING HERE AS YOUR CAPTIVE. YOU DIVULGE SO MUCH.

TWO HOURS LATER...

MY QUESTION IS A *SIMPLE* ONE, PRINCE CHARMING.

WHAT DO YOU WANT IN RETURN FOR THE CAPTURED HEADS?

A SMALL MUNDY PARK, THREE BLOCKS FROM FABLETOWN.

A SIMPLE QUESTION PERHAPS, AMBASSADOR, BUT ONE THAT DEMANDS A MORE COMPLEX, NUANCED ANSWER. WHAT HEADS MIGHT YOU BE REFERRING TO?

WHAT HEADS?

WHAT HEADS?

WE ALREADY *KNOW* YOU'VE CAPTURED SOME OF THE WOODEN HEADS. YOUR WOLF ADMITTED AS MUCH DURING HIS TERRORIST STRIKE INTO OUR LANDS.

OH YES--THAT. WELL, WE MAY HAVE A *FEW* THAT SURVIVED THE FIRES AND WIND STORM.

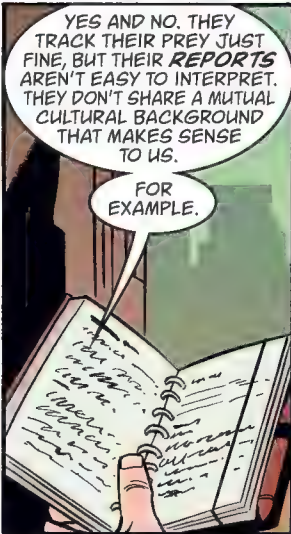
AH, I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND. LET ME RECOMPOSE MY INITIAL QUESTION.

WHAT DO YOU WANT IN RETURN FOR LETTING US KNOW HOW MANY WOODEN HEADS YOU HAVE IN CAPTIVITY?

HMMMMMM-- LET'S SEE. WHAT DO WE WANT?

WHAT DO WE WANT?







HOW'D IT GO MEETING WITH THE ENEMY, SIR?

CHARMINGLY.



NOT TO SPOIL YOUR GOOD MOOD, SIR, BUT WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET SOME CLEANING HERE? FLY'S NOT BEEN TO WORK FOR WEEKS AND THIS PLACE IS A MESS.

ANY CHANCE WE CAN GET ANOTHER JANITOR FROM ONE OF THE OTHER BUILDINGS TO CLEAN THIS PIG-STY?



NO CHANCE AT ALL, MR. GRIMBLE. I WON'T FLAUNT SOME REPLACEMENT IN FLY'S FACE WHEN HE'S ALREADY FEELING HIS WORST.

WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MUDDLE ALONG UNTIL HE'S READY TO COME BACK TO WORK. IN THE MEANTIME, I SUGGEST YOU PITCH IN.



IN SHORT-- GET OFF YOUR HIND END AND GRAB A BROOM AND A MOP.

ANYTHING ELSE I CAN HELP YOU WITH?

NO THANKS.







OH, THERE YOU ARE.

FLY?

NICE TO SEE YOU OUT AND ABOUT, BUDDY.



GOOD. I WANTED TO RESIGN IN PERSON. HERE, TAKE THIS.

BUT--

I CAN'T BE YOUR JANITOR ANYMORE.



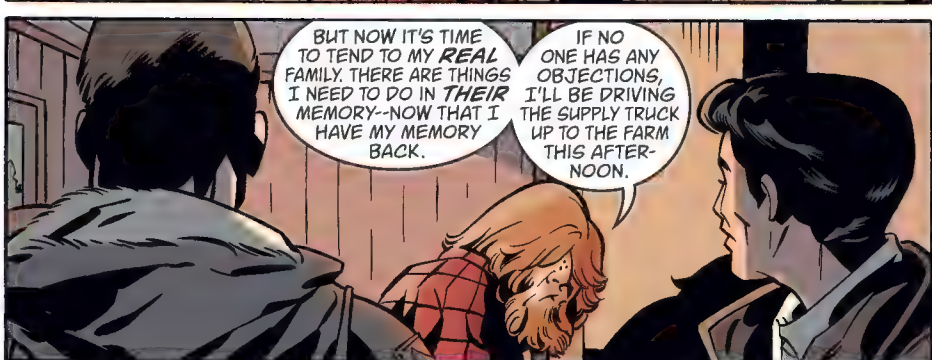
NOR CAN I CONTINUE WORKING OFF AN ENDLESS SERIES OF IMAGINARY CRIMES.

WE ONLY DID IT TO KEEP YOU HERE *SAFE* WITH US, FLY.



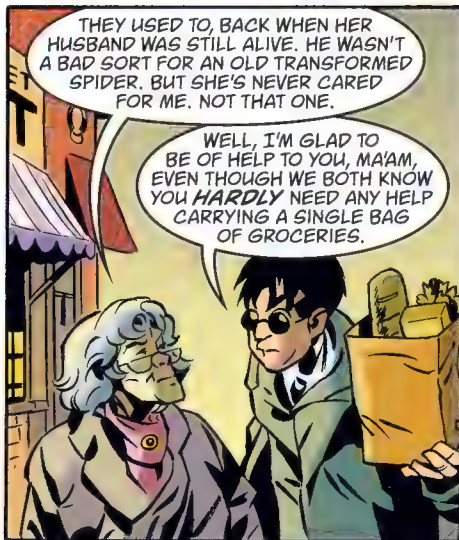
I KNOW, AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR WHAT YOU DID. I NEED FAMILY AROUND ME TO BE HAPPY AND EVERYONE HERE PROVIDED ONE FOR ME.

I'LL ALWAYS TREASURE YOUR KINDNESS AND FRIENDSHIP.



BUT NOW IT'S TIME TO TEND TO MY *REAL* FAMILY. THERE ARE THINGS I NEED TO DO IN *THEIR* MEMORY--NOW THAT I HAVE MY MEMORY BACK.

IF NO ONE HAS ANY OBJECTIONS, I'LL BE DRIVING THE SUPPLY TRUCK UP TO THE FARM THIS AFTERNOON.





WE BOTH KNOW YOU COULD LIFT A **YAK** OVER YOUR HEAD, IF YOU EVER FOUND THE NEED TO.

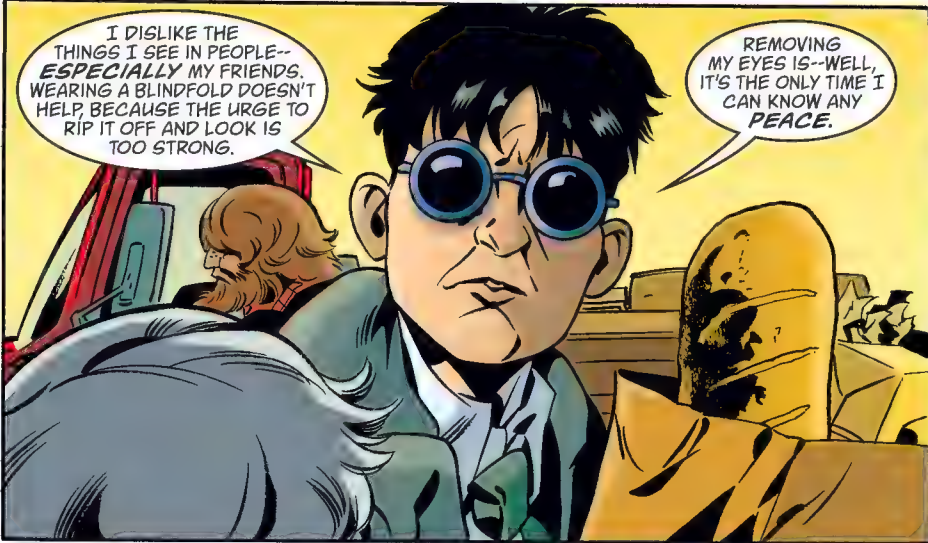
MIND YOUR **MANNERS**, YOUNG MAN. DON'T BE FRESH WITH ME. I ASKED YOUR HELP BECAUSE I THOUGHT WE SHOULD TALK, YOU AND I.



I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING TO DO.

WHAT WOULD THAT BE, MAAM?

ANY CHILD COULD SEE IT, IF THEY'D ONLY PAY ATTENTION. THE PRESSURE'S BUILDING UP IN YOU, ISN'T IT? YOU'RE ABOUT TO **GOUGE YOUR EYES OUT** AGAIN.



I DISLIKE THE THINGS I SEE IN PEOPLE-- **ESPECIALLY** MY FRIENDS. WEARING A BLINDFOLD DOESN'T HELP, BECAUSE THE URGE TO RIP IT OFF AND LOOK IS TOO STRONG.

REMOVING MY EYES IS--WELL, IT'S THE ONLY TIME I CAN KNOW ANY **PEACE**.



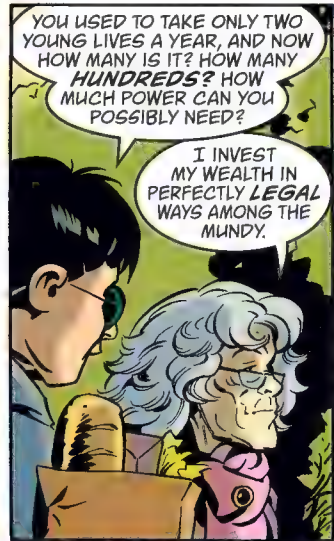
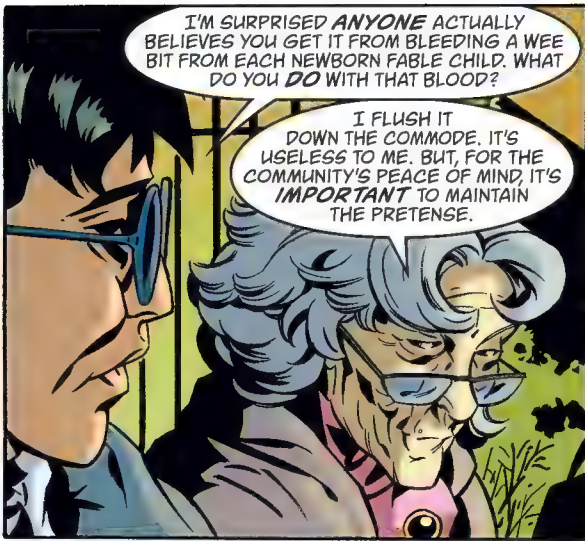
THAT'S TOO BAD, BUT I DON'T LIKE MY WORK BEING DESTROYED. AND WE'RE GOING TO NEED YOUR PENETRATING GAZE SOON. OH **YES**, WE WILL.

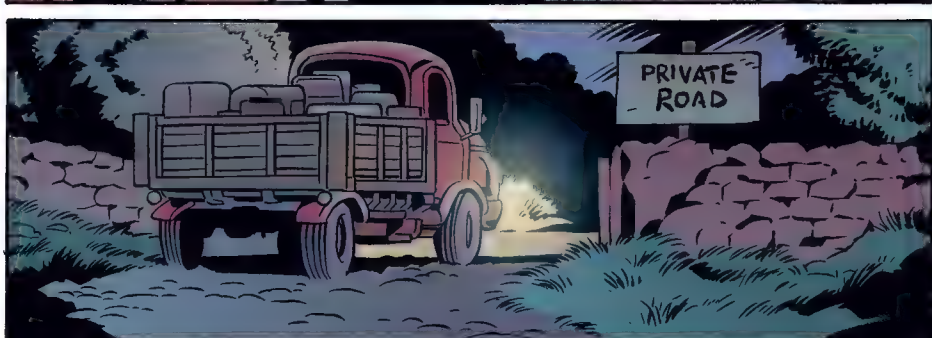
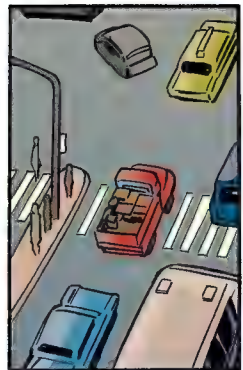
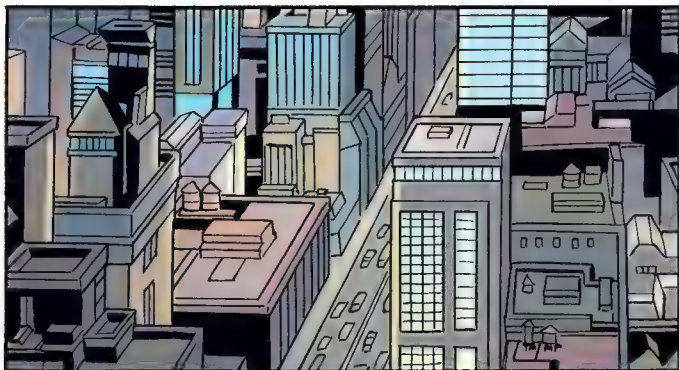
EVEN IF IT MEANS I ALSO LOOK YOUR WAY FROM TIME TO TIME?



WHAT'S **THAT** SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

I KNOW WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO, FRAU TOTENKINDER. I KNOW HOW YOU **REALLY** GET YOUR POWER IN THIS WORLD. AND SUCH POWER IT IS.





AT THE
WOODLAND
THAT NIGHT...

I WAS
RESTACKING
BOOKS LIKE THE
MEAN, MR. NASTY
MAYOR TOLD ME
TO, WHEN HE
SPOKE!

WHO
SPOKE?

THE
FORSWORN
KNIGHT! HE SCARED
THE BOOKS RIGHT
OUT OF MY
HANDS!

WHAT
DID HE
SAY?

I FORGET.
I WAS TOO STARTLED.
BUT IT CAN'T BE ANYTHING
GOOD. HE **NEVER** SPEAKS
UP WHEN IT'S ANYTHING
GOOD.

HE HARDLY
SPEAKS AT ALL. OR
EVER. OTHERS HAVE
CLAIMED TO HEAR HIM
IN THE PAST, BUT I'VE
NEVER HEARD HIM.

YOU'RE SURE YOU
DIDN'T *IMAGINE* IT?
WORKING ALL ALONE IN
THIS VAST, SPOOKY
PLACE?

DO
YOU THINK I'M
SOME DUMMY WHO
DOESN'T NOTICE
REAL THINGS?
I NOTICE
THINGS!

AND I DON'T IMAGINE IT
WHEN I HEAR ARMORED
GHOSTS SPEAK OR SEE
PEOPLE KISS SOMEONE
THEY AREN'T **MARRIED**
TO, OR--

OOPS.

KISS?

WHAT
KISS?



THE NEXT MORNING...

YOO HOO...

MR. BLUE?



TIME TO GET UP.



MR. BLUE?



YIEEEAA-AAGGHH!!

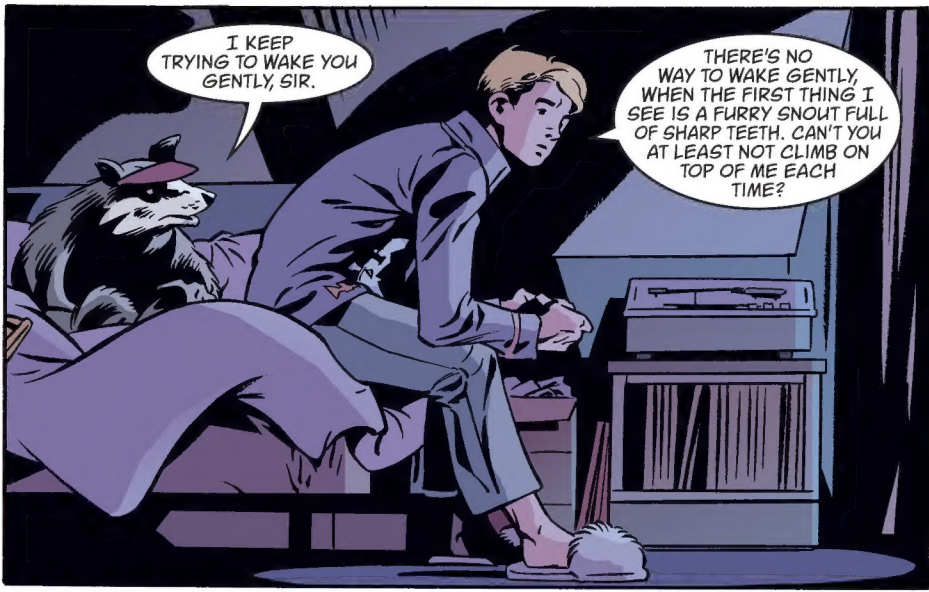
YIEEEE!



DAMMIT, STINKY!

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO DO THAT TO ME EVERY SINGLE MORNING?





I KEEP TRYING TO WAKE YOU GENTLY, SIR.

THERE'S NO WAY TO WAKE GENTLY, WHEN THE FIRST THING I SEE IS A FURRY SNOOT FULL OF SHARP TEETH. CAN'T YOU AT LEAST NOT CLIMB ON TOP OF ME EACH TIME?



YOU'D THINK ONE WOULD GET *USED* TO IT, EVENTUALLY.

IN ANY CASE, MISS RED SAYS IT'S TIME TO GET UP. WE'VE LOTS TO DO TODAY, BREAKFAST'S ON THE TABLE AND, I QUOTE, "WE'RE BURNING DAY-LIGHT."



ARE YOU KIDDING ME? THE SUN'S BARELY UP.

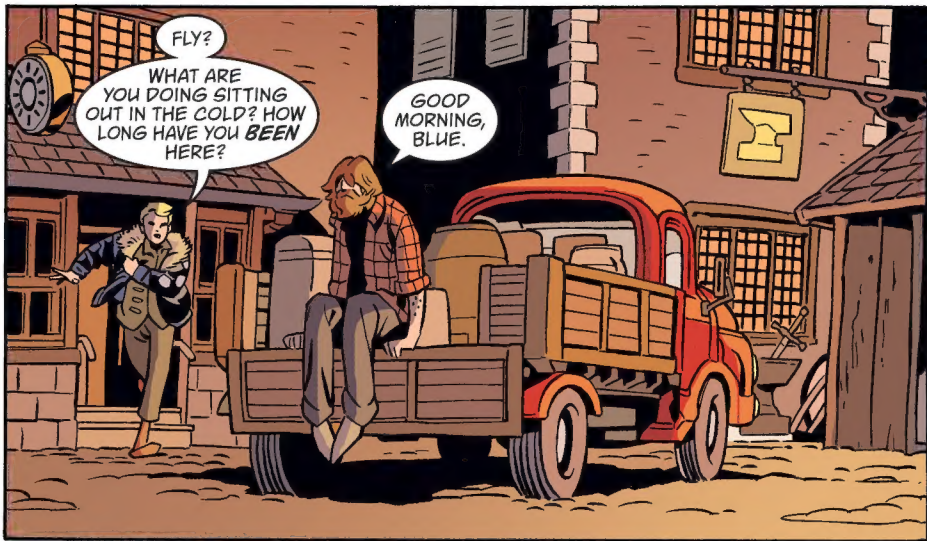
HEY, WHAT THE HELL?



WHAT'S FLY DOING OUT THERE?



STINKY, PLEASE TELL ROSE THERE'LL BE ONE MORE FOR BREAKFAST.



FLY?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING SITTING OUT IN THE COLD? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?

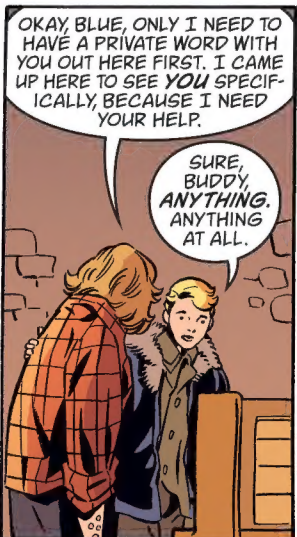
GOOD MORNING, BLUE.



I ARRIVED LATE LAST NIGHT--OR VERY EARLY THIS MORNING. IN ANY CASE I DIDN'T WANT TO WAKE ANYONE, SO I THOUGHT I'D WAIT OUT HERE.

YOU'RE AS COLD AS A STEEL RAIL! I'M SURPRISED YOU DIDN'T FREEZE SOLID OUT HERE LAST NIGHT!

COME INTO THE HOUSE AND GET WARM.



OKAY, BLUE, ONLY I NEED TO HAVE A PRIVATE WORD WITH YOU OUT HERE FIRST. I CAME UP HERE TO SEE YOU SPECIFICALLY, BECAUSE I NEED YOUR HELP.

SURE, BUDDY. ANYTHING AT ALL.



GOOD, BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO TEACH ME HOW TO USE THE WITCHING CLOAK AND THE VORPAL SWORD.

WITH THOSE I CAN GO BACK TO THE HOMELANDS LIKE YOU DID AND KILL EVERY GOBLIN I ENCOUNTER--BY THE THOUSANDS, OR THE TENS OF THOUSANDS.



OVER THE YEARS I CAN DEPOPULATE ENTIRE TOWNS, OR COUNTRIES--OR WORLDS. I WILL BECOME A DESTROYER OF THOSE FOUL THINGS WHO DESTROYED ME SO LONG AGO.

SO, WILL YOU HELP?

NEXT:
Single-handedly invading the Homelands. Third time's a charm.

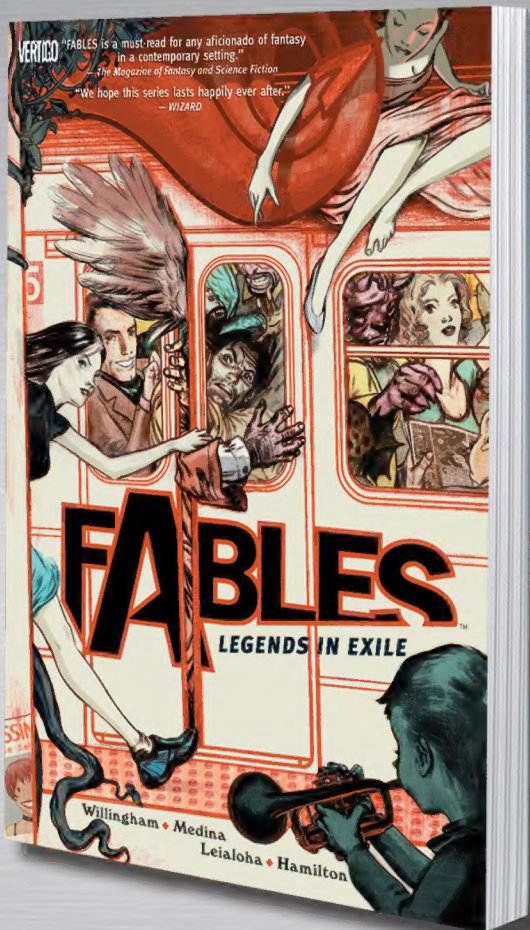
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BILL WILLINGHAM

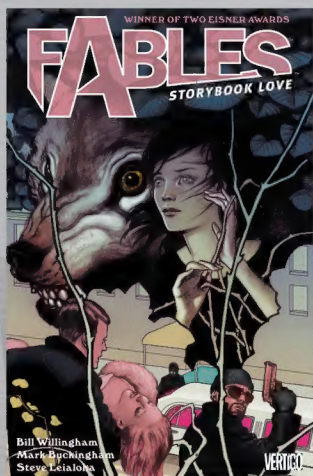
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– THE WASHINGTON POST



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- VOL. 4: MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS
- VOL. 5: THE MEAN SEASONS
- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



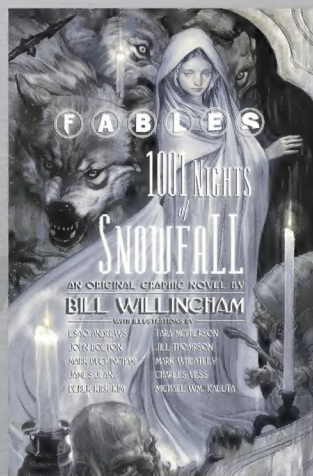
FABLES VOL. 3:
STORYBOOK LOVE



FABLES VOL. 6:
HOMELANDS

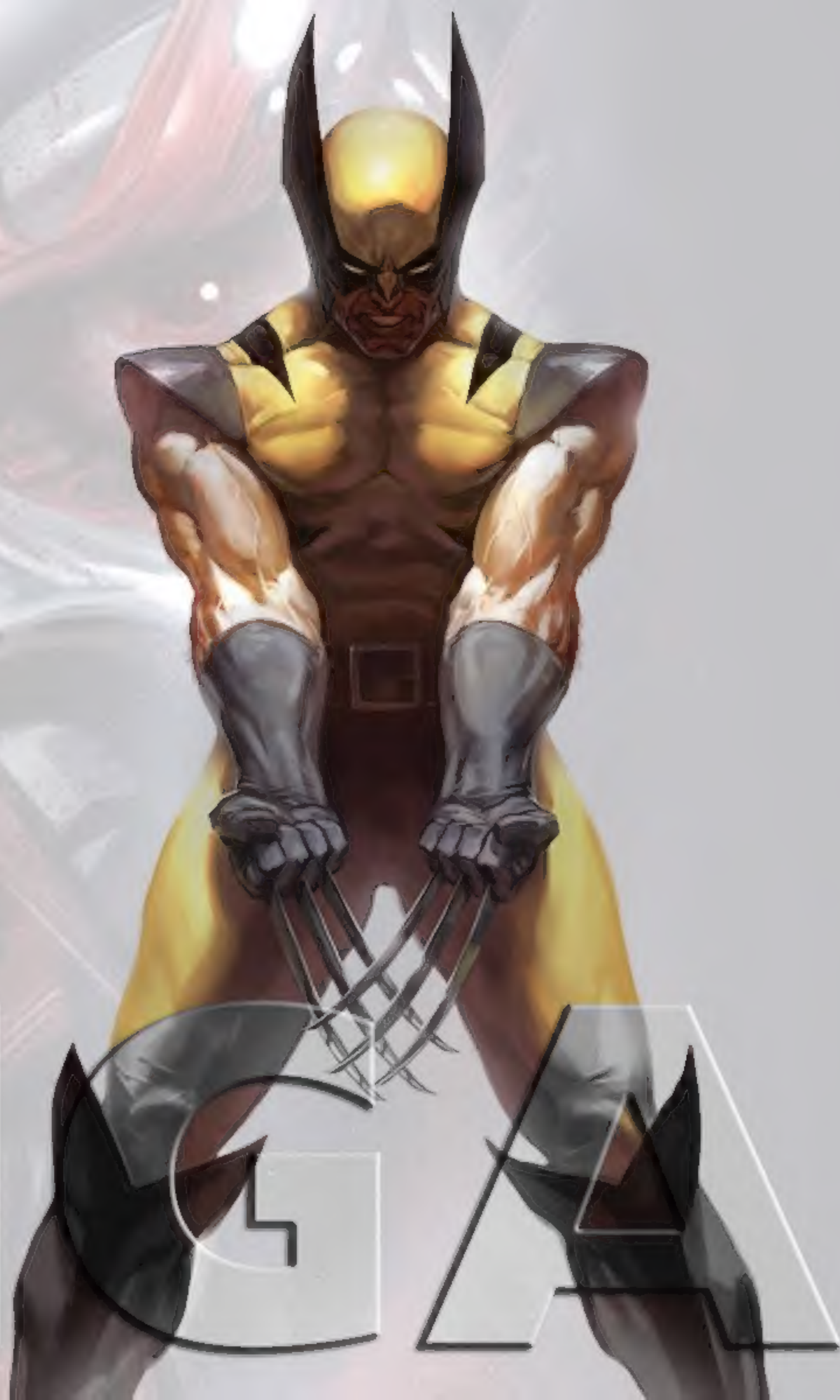


FABLES:
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



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NATHAN